

# The Faithful Steward

A Newsletter of the Holy Orthodox Church in North America

## Father Nicholas Zagorovsky

from *Pravoslavnaya Zhizn*, October, 1993, Jordanville, NY  
slightly edited by Holy Transfiguration Monastery, Brookline, MA

**F**ather Nicholas (Sangushko-Zagorovsky) was born on July 27, 1872 to an ancient princely family which had become impoverished and moved into the priestly class. His father, Deacon Michael Feoktistovich, died young, leaving his three children to be brought up by their mother, Paraskeva Andreyevna, a clever and energetic woman. Nicholas Zagorovsky was a happy, boisterous, talented boy. From childhood he loved his native Ukrainian language and popular songs. He demonstrated an exceptional talent as a comedian; every appearance of his on the stage elicited a storm of laughter. Nicholas's fame as a comic actor spread far beyond the bounds of the seminary. He was invited to join a celebrated Ukrainian troupe, but Paraskeva Andreyevna wouldn't hear of it.

"I want to see you in golden vestments, otherwise I'll curse you," she declared to her son.

He had to submit. Nicholas married Ekaterina Ivanovna, an educated woman who had graduated from the

diocesan school for daughters of the clergy. They had two children: Vladimir and Lydia. The village

had in his cell was the witness of his bitter tears. He called on the Mother of God to help him in his spiritual struggle. And then

a miracle took place: his brilliant natural talents were transformed into spiritual ones: the artist-comedian became the famous preacher and people's pastor. Although the icon before which he prayed was painted in the Italian style and was not a copy of the ancient icon "Search of the Lost," Fr. Nicholas called it "The Malyzhino Search of the Lost." He adorned it with precious stones and venerated it as wonder-working. How many times thereafter did he sing the Akathist in front of it: "Rejoice, grace-filled Virgin Birth-giver of God, the saviour of all the lost," and

the Mother of God came to help, healing, saving and driving out demons.

The people loved Fr. Nicholas and surrounded him in a tight ring. His spiritual children did not leave



*Saint Seraphim Zagorovsky*

*from Holy Trinity Monastery, Jordanville, NY*

where he was pastor was called Malyzhino. It was a complete backwater. This was difficult for Fr. Nicholas, because he had nowhere to demonstrate his richly endowed nature. The icon of the Mother of God which he

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him even when he moved to Kharkov to give his children an education. In Kharkov Fr. Nicholas became the rector of the city's hospital church. Here he continued to serve Akathists in front of the icon and give sermons. Soon his reputation as a new Chrysostom spread throughout Kharkov, and the people began to come to him from all directions. A women's convent began to form around him, and all the necessary preparations had already been made when the Revolution broke out. But the convent continued to exist in secret. One of the novices was Ulyasha Nozdrina. When Fr. Nicholas was forced to leave Kharkov, he chose her as one of those who were to accompany him. Fr. Nicholas once told Ulyasha in jest, "You don't have a head, but a kettle." As one might conclude from this, she was quite simple, but sturdy—a trait needed for the tribulations that awaited them.

Ulyasha (in the tonsure, Mother Magdalina) recounts: "Vladyka John Maximovich [who was glorified as a saint in 1994] was a student then, and he used to visit Metropolitan Anthony [Khrapovitsky, at that time Archbishop of Kharkov]. The relics of St. Meletius were there, and Metropolitan Anthony blessed our batiushka to look after them. Batiushka would come there every day, as would Vladyka John, who was then known as Misha and who would always ask batiushka's blessing to go to his studies. Once Fr. Nicholas said to him laughingly:

"Misha, you never miss the batiushka. You will probably become a bishop or a saint."

"It's you, Fr. Nicholas, who will become a saint," replied Misha.

"And look, you see, Vladyka John became both a bishop and a saint; he is soon going to be glorified. And my batiushka is also a saint..."

"Batiushka was a holy man. He did so many miracles! I remember once there was a terrible drought, and batiushka organized a pilgrimage to go to Sviatogorsk monastery to pray for rain. So many people gathered, several thousands. They walked in groups with icons and gonfalons [banners]. Everyone was singing. When they arrived, they began to serve an all-night vigil in the woods near the monastery, for none of the churches could accommodate everyone. The vigil went on all night, and the hieromonks were confessing the people all night. And in the morning practically everyone received Communion. And when Communion was finished, batiushka said:

"And now we are going to pray to God for rain. Everyone fall face down and pray to God until heavenly tears begin to drop on the earth."

"Everyone fell on their knees. But the sky was completely clear. And suddenly clouds began to gather, and

drops of rain began to fall like tears. Of course, everyone jumped up and ran for cover—it was a real downpour. After the meal, they asked batiushka:

"Are you going to ring the bell for the people to gather?"

"But it was pouring cats and dogs at the time. Batiushka thought for a little, dropped his head, and then said:

"Ring!"

"And suddenly the rain stopped. So we returned home so joyful, so happy. Everybody looked at us out of the windows, they didn't understand what had happened. But we waved at them with branches and sang:

"Christ is risen!"

"And how many people he healed! They often used to call him to the village of Pokrovskoye. He often went there to visit the sick—there were many possessed people there. Batiushka had only to come within a few miles of the village, and all the possessed people were shouting:

"He's coming. He's coming to torment us, the whining bald-head is coming to torment us!"

"And several people were already holding these possessed people down—they were so strong and furious. Batiushka came with the icon, served a *moleben*, then everyone came up to kiss the icon. And then, my God, what shouting, what a noise! And then they gradually quieted down, batiushka read a prayer over them, and while he was there the possessed came peacefully up to receive Communion, and while this was taking place there was no shouting or cries. And how they loved batiushka! When there was a famine, this village of Pokrovskoye brought food in on carts. Batiushka took nothing for himself, but handed it out. My sister and brother were in a home—we were orphans, you know—and he sent provisions to the orphanages: one cart to one home, another to another, a third to the prison. It was all distributed. And when they arrested him, they brought so much food that the whole prison was fed.

"They later sent batiushka to Petrograd. And there, too, he healed very many people. In Petersburg there was a widow who was dying. She had two small children and a sister, and someone told them that there was this batiushka, call him if she's dying, and he'll help you. Batiushka and I went there. She was lying in bed, almost dead, with a bloody foam coming from her mouth. She couldn't open her eyes any longer. Batiushka began to serve a *moleben* in front of this icon, then an Akathist, while the children said:

"Batiushka, mamochka is almost dead. You have to serve the service for the dying."

"She doesn't need it," answered Batiushka.

“And then, on the second day, she suddenly came to. It turned out that when she was unconscious she had felt that someone was praying for her. Of course, they immediately called batiushka, and he came with the Holy Gifts to communicate her. We arrived there, and she opened her eyes and said:

“‘Who’s come to us? Call him, quickly!’

“He confessed her, gave her Communion, and the next day the children came and said:

“‘Batiushka, mama is feeling better!’

“And then she recovered. So the children sewed an embroidered belt which priests used to wear and brought it to batiushka. They were so grateful! And she recovered and became his faithful spiritual daughter.”

Another spiritual daughter of batiushka’s, Mother Ierusalima, recounts:

“Fr. Nicholas Zagorovsky served in the hospital church. What joy he gave to the sick people at Pascha! He would exchange kisses with all of them, and would go round giving them all pascha and eggs. He was so welcoming and tender, his only words were: “my joy,” “my little one,” “my sister”—that was how he addressed his flock. And every Sunday with him was like Pascha. The services were long, until three in the afternoon, and the Liturgy always ended with an Akathist to the Mother of God “Search of the lost.” During the Akathist the whole church was on their knees. Everyone was weeping, and he was weeping. His sermons were also very long, two hours long, and during the sermon he was weeping all the time, and everyone was weeping, so that even the walls were weeping, because so many people were packed in that they became wet from the people’s breath. And after the service everyone would be invited to a meal, to drink tea and sing psalms and spiritual songs. Batiushka himself set many psalms to music.

“And then I remember him declaring to the people that today would be his last Liturgy. He had to prepare for his arrest because they [the Communists] had said to him:

“‘Don’t commemorate Patriarch Tikhon.’

“I couldn’t reconcile myself with this. And when he said this, there was such an outburst of weeping that it could be heard a kilometer away on the street. He wept and sobbed, and everyone accompanied him, and in the evening they came to his house and arrested him. They put him in prison. Now he had a very large flock around Kharkov, and when they learned that he had been arrested, in the morning the head of the prison got a fright: the whole of the square round the prison was covered with peasant carts which were full of food with which they fed all the prisoners. And when the head of the prison saw

that neither that day, nor the next, nor the day after did the carts leave, and so much food that they did not know what to do with it, he decided to send Batiushka to Petrograd. And he took with him one nun, the most energetic one, Ulyasha...”

They went to Petersburg, but in 1930 Fr. Nicholas was arrested for refusing to accept the Declaration of Metropolitan Sergius, and he was sent to Solovki. Matushka Ekaterina Ivanovna and Ulyasha Nozdrina undertook the distant journey to visit batiushka. After arriving in Solovki, Fr. Nicholas and some other prisoners were sent to a settlement in the far north. Exhausted and tormented, they walked across the tundra. Once they stopped for the night in a deserted chapel. Fr. Nicholas woke up and saw that he was sleeping under an icon of the Mother of God “Search of the lost.” This encouraged him enormously, and he felt that he was under the protection of the Mother of God. He was the only one to reach the destination: the others all died en route.

Ulyasha, self-sacrificing as ever, did not abandon batiushka. She came to him on a cart, bringing a basket full of provisions. She had to go across thousands of miles of taiga, but the Lord preserved her, and she arrived safely. Batiushka was being guarded by sentries, but Ulyasha did not lose her presence of mind. She called the soldiers Petka or Vanka.

“This is my uncle,” she told them. “He took me in when I was orphaned and brought me up. You also have a mother—remember her! Let my uncle eat with me!”

Permission was given, and batiushka went to eat with Ulyasha.

When Fr. Nicholas had served his term of punishment, he was released to live wherever he liked except Kharkov province. He chose the town of Oboyan in Kursk province, which was the nearest to Kharkov. As they were travelling towards Oboyan by train, Fr. Nicholas and Ulyasha were talking about the fact that they knew no one there, and there was nowhere for them to go. By chance the wife of an exiled priest heard their conversation. She informed them that there was a secret convent in Oboyan, and gave them its address. They set off there, but the mother-doorkeeper categorically refused to let them in since she feared that the authorities’ attention would be drawn to the convent.

“Still, please tell the abbess about us,” asked Fr. Nicholas. Mother abbess soon came out and welcomed them in. It turned out that during the night St. Seraphim of Sarov had appeared to her in her sleep and said:

“Seraphim from Kharkov is coming to you. Receive him.”



Batiushka began to weep. He had in fact been secretly tonsured in Solovki with the name Seraphim.

In Oboyan they lived very quietly. Fr. Nicholas never came out onto the street by day. Sometimes his Kharkov nuns came to him by night, and in this way he directed their secret convent. Ulyasha lived in complete obedience to batiushka. She was tonsured by him with the name Magdalina.

Mother Magdalina likes to tell the story of how she became a nurse in Oboyan with Fr. Nicholas's help. The story was as follows. When they went to live in exile in Oboyan, Ulyasha worked in the hospital as a junior nurse. However, an unexpected order arrived: all those with little education had to take an exam in accordance with the ten-year plan. Ulyasha was not very good at studying. So Fr. Nicholas began to give her lessons. Before the exam batiushka wrote a composition entitled "Morning in the Village" and ordered Ulyasha to take it with her and write it out when they declared the subject of the essay. And in fact they gave the subject "Morning in the Village." For the oral exam, Fr. Nicholas told Ulyasha to learn a poem. When they asked in class who knew this poem, it turned out that Ulyasha was the only one who knew it. It was the same with an algebra test. So she passed her exam and became a nurse.

During the war, Oboyan was occupied by the Nazis. However, they were very respectful to Fr. Nicholas. He was soon driven home by ambulance. In Kharkov Fr. Nicholas celebrated services in his house in the presence of a large congregation.

Mother Ierusalima recounts: "When batiushka returned to Kharkov, he did not serve in a church, but in his own home, in a basement. What Liturgies they were, such a triumph! My mother, sister, and I always went. The whole room was full of people. It was a big room; it was always full of people. The chanting was beautiful. The nuns always did the singing. Everyone received Communion. Everyone was so joyful, as if the old times had returned. But then the Reds began to attack. They would have arrested him, of course. His daughter, Lydia, had already left with her husband. And he said to matushka:

"I can't wait for the Reds here. I get frightened even thinking of their approach."

However, Mother Magdalina says: "Batiushka did not want to leave, but his family wanted him to leave. Now batiushka's son-in-law, Lydia's husband, worked in the theater as an opera director. And when the opera left, he and Lydia with their little son Seryozha also left. They wanted to take batiushka with them, but he wouldn't in any circumstances. At this point the people came. They all came.

"Batiushka, if you stay, they'll take you. You'll be

exiled, or rather they'll kill you, and we won't know where your grave is.'

"No,' he said, 'I'm not going anywhere. I'm staying, come what may.'

"But his daughter and son-in-law arranged it so that the Germans sent a car for batiushka. They simply arrived and said without any discussion:

"Batiushka, you must go!"

"But his matushka could not leave the house because her daughter had gone. Everyone had gone, and she needed to look after the house. So she, Mother Meletia and Dunya remained at home and told me:

"Ulyasha, you have to go with batiushka.'

"Batiushka was already old and ill. Of course, I was a little frightened of going, and I asked one other sister, Xenia, about it. But at this point the wanderer, Petro, also decided to go with us. And I felt a little better because I was at any rate not alone; there were the three of us. They immediately took us to the train. I left in the clothes I was standing in, but then the sisters ran up to the train and brought some things for batiushka, a coat for me and something else. But batiushka was ill; he often had heart-attacks. We arrived at Peremysl in Poland, and there batiushka became really ill, so we had to stop in Peremysl. Batiushka was put in a hospital, he was feeling very ill. I didn't leave him, but nursed him and did everything. Then they called his daughter and son-in-law; they all arrived. He was lying quietly in bed. Tears were flowing out of his eyes. He opened his eyes, looked at everyone and said:

"I don't see Ulyasha.'

"Then he stretched out his hand and I held him, and he took my hand and kissed it, and I felt that he was thanking me for not leaving him. And his tears again began to flow. His daughter took a clean handkerchief and began to wipe his face, and in this way he quietly, peacefully died. Almost the whole hospital came to look—he was lying there so radiant and smiling! There was a church there, and on Orthodox feasts a Russian priest would serve. Batiushka died on the eve of the Feast of the Protection of the Mother of God [September 30/October 13, 1943], and on the feast there was a Liturgy. We read the Psalter for batiushka, and there were *pan-nikhidas*, and he was buried in Peremysl. And it turns out that in the place in Peremysl where he died, his grandparents and great-grandparents had all died. You know, batiushka was from an ancient family. And there was even a monastery of the Zagorovskys somewhere there."

*Pravoslavnaya Zhizn*, October, 1993,  
Jordanville, NY, used by permission.

## Clergy Synaxis, 2010



On the Sunday after the Exaltation of the Cross, September 20/October 3, 2010, clergy gathered with Bishop Demetrius, Metropolitan Makarios, Metropolitan Ephraim, and Metropolitan Moses for a Hierarchical Liturgy at St. Mark's Cathedral in Roslindale, MA. This Liturgy concluded the three-day Clergy Synaxis.

### Future Trips with St. Paul's Fellowship of Labor

St. Xenia Parish, Guatemala: February 4–11 (with an option to stay until the 14th), 2011

St. Peter and Paul Mission Parish, Tucson, AZ: March 2011

St. Gregory of Sinai Monastery, Kelseyville, CA: April 2011 (male trip)

Holy Land Pilgrimage, Jerusalem: June 17–25, 2011

Convent of the Meeting of the Lord, Stanwood, WA: July 9–16, 2011

Holy Theotokos Convent, Newmarket, ON: July 23–30, 2011

New England Tour: August 7–14, 2011

Contact St. Paul's Fellowship of Labor by calling (814) 386-5254 or by emailing [thespfl@gmail.com](mailto:thespfl@gmail.com)

## The Monastery of the Apostle Andrew in Karpasia

On the martyric island of Cyprus, the first-called disciple of Christ found hospitality when being pursued; there he performed miracles, revealed a miraculous spring of holy water, and is associated with many religious traditions. In order to honor the memory of the great Saint, Martyr, and Apostle of Karpasia, the people of Cyprus founded a picturesque monastery on that prominent cape, where thousands of sick and disabled Cypriots gather at every anniversary of the Saint's feast. These suppliants wash their face and hands with the crystal clear holy water from a little spring among the rocks near the monastery, and they ask the Saint, who saw, accompanied, and spoke with our Saviour, to heal them. Many of those who venerate the icon of the Apostle with deep faith and humble compunction get better, return to their villages with a peaceful joy of soul, and glorify the great Saint. Even non-Christian Turks and Jews go to the monastery of the Apostle Andrew in order to wash with the blessed water. Those who cannot travel to distant Karpasia, send their live gift (an ox or a goat) unescorted to the Saint's monastery. The Apostle leads the gift up to the monastery door, the bell rings, the monks are notified, and they receive the offering.

### Unexplainably calm waters

Cypriot tradition mentions that the Apostle Andrew, being pursued by unbelievers in Jerusalem after the Ascension of Christ, managed to escape to the rocky shores of Karpasia. The islanders, under Roman rule at this time, lived in luxury and idolatry. Let us not forget that this is where the goddess of beauty was born and it was expected that Aphrodite, who had allegedly been born of the ocean's foam, should be worshipped with passion. Under these conditions, the Apostle would hesitate to ask the town officials for help.

Tradition mentions that he discovered a cave by the sea, and lived there like the beasts of the earth and the birds of the sky, waiting for a passing caique to appear and to take him. After some time, a ship which had sailed out of Salamina of Cyprus appeared on the horizon, seeming as though it would turn around the cape in order to head to the open White Sea.

The Saint raised a signal flag. They saw it from the ship, and sent a boat to rescue the shipwrecked. The Apostle, weatherbeaten and barefoot, with his hair and beard wet, got on the boat. The ship then continued on its voyage. Suddenly, five kilometers away, near the seagull islands called Kleidia, a terrible calmness de-

scended. The waters became calm as oil, silence surrounded the sailboat. This lack of wind lasted five or six days and nights. The drinking water was finished, the barrels were emptied, and the sailors were parched with thirst. The captain asked the Apostle whether he knew of any water fountain, little brook, or spring on the Cypriot shores. The Saint pointed toward the rocks at an inlet. Two sailors took a boat in that direction. Nothing! Complete desert, red thorns, and poisonous snakes. The sailors, disheartened, turned back. The captain became angry and threatened to throw the unknown hermit overboard if he did not find the spring.

### The water spouts out of the rock

Without protesting, the Saint entered the boat accompanied by two or three sailors. When they came to the shores of Karpasia, the sailors commanded, "Go ahead, old man. Find the spring with the water, or the catfish will eat you!...."

The Saint, without speaking, knelt on a rock and started sending up his tearful entreaty. The sailors watched him curiously. Then the Apostle came near a low rock, walked close to a slab, lifted it with his hands and threw it into the sea. At that moment, the silver water gurgled and leapt up like a fountain, fragrant and cool. The sailors were beside themselves with joy, filled their flasks with the surprisingly pristine water, and returned to the boat with the Saint. The crew and the passengers became festive. They were drinking the holy water and blessing Zeus(!) who showed mercy on them, but were unable to guess the true identity of the unknown hermit who had given them this benefaction.

### Baptism on the boat

Among the passengers was Charidimos, the blind little son of the captain. He was melancholy and roamed from place to place, frequently weeping because he could not see the sea, the white sails, or the islands.

The Saint approached the boy. He gave him a cup of water to drink from the miraculous spring, washed his blind eyes and forehead with the holy water, blessed him and then withdrew silently to the back of the ship, without speaking.

Suddenly a shout of joy echoed on the ship, a child's triumphant cry. It was the blind boy who cried out. "I see! I see the waves, I see the sails filling with wind, I see the people. The kind father made me well... The nice old man who found the spring gave me back my sight!"



The crew and passengers approached the child astonished. And then like a frightened flock of sheep they drew close to the Apostle Andrew, fell at his feet, and thanking him with tears, they kissed his hands. The captain did not know how to express his joy.

“My ship is yours,” he said to him. “You are the captain... Command me whatever you wish...”

The Saint lifted up his eyes and said: “The Crucified Christ made your child well. May I be deemed worthy to suffer the same fate and be crucified also...”

And so he found an occasion to preach the teachings of Christ to the pagans. Everyone believed. The Saint baptized them with the miraculous holy water and named the blind boy, who regained his sight, Andrew...

### A Church of the Saint at the spring

The boat continued on its voyage in the northern Aegean. It passed Propontis, and after the Saint had disembarked in Byzantium, it headed for the Black Sea. The Saint headed south from Byzantium and taught the Gospel in Greece. When he reached Patras he was martyred by crucifixion. His prayer to have the same death as Christ was answered by the Almighty.

The captain of “Poseidon,” the ship that received the Saint from the Cypriot shores, was deeply moved by his glorious death on the cross and he made a promise to build him a temple of worship near the miracle-working spring at the cape. He ordered an image of the Apostle Andrew to be painted by a skilled artist in Byzantium. He himself brought it to Cyprus, built a church and a guesthouse, and planted palms and laurel around the holy spring. Later, around the fourth century A.D., the Cypriot Christians expanded the guesthouse, built a picturesque monastery, embellished the ancient image of the Saint with silver and gold, and they revered and honored him as a great Saint and Apostle.

This is the story of the founding of the Cypriot monastery at the tip of the cape of Karpasia, which points to the neighboring east.

*Written by Pavlos Krinaios  
Translated by Athena Antonopoulos,  
and here presented slightly edited.*



*Apostolos Andreas Monastery*

## Priest to Serve Portland Missions



*Fr. George and parishioners at one of the missions*

Father George Psaromatis was ordained to the priesthood on the feast of the Holy Nativity of the Theotokos (September 8/21, 2010) during the Hierarchical Liturgy at the Cathedral of the Holy Nativity of the Theotokos. His Eminence Metropolitan Moses presided over the Liturgy, assisted by Protopresbyter Constantine Parr, Presbyter Photios Cooper and Deacon James Dimock. Father George will assist in administering the Mysteries to the missions in the Portland Diocese and also assist in weekday Liturgies at the Cathedral. He asks for prayers.

### **St. Xenia Camp 2011 August 14-20 (n.s.)**

For more information, please contact

Fr. Demetrios (781) 237-3949  
jimhoulares@yahoo.com



## Priest Ordained at Saint Philaret House



On September 23/October 6, 2010, Father John Tokarick (second from right) was ordained to the priesthood at Saint Philaret House in Roslindale, Massachusetts. He is seen here with Archpriest Rodion Laskowski, Bishop Demetrius, Metropolitan Makarios, and Archpriest Peter Farnsworth.

Father John was born June 3, 1960, in the coal region town of Saint Clair, PA. His paternal grandparents and his maternal grandmother were all of Carpatho-Rusyn descent. He was initially a “Greek Catholic” from Holy Trinity Parish in St. Clair, PA. Father moved to Lancaster, PA in 1966, and lived in the Scranton, PA area throughout his grade school and high school years. He attended seminaries in Erlanger, KY as well as Philadelphia, PA. Prior to acceptance into the Metropolis of Boston, he was a priest of the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church based in New York City. Father John was a counselor/co-ordinator of several group homes for the mentally and physically challenged in the Lancaster, PA area for nine years. Other previous work included chaplaincy at Lancaster General Hospital as well as several other health care facilities. Father is profoundly thankful to the hierarchs of HOCNA as well as to Father Rodion, the rector at Pillars of Orthodoxy Church in Carlisle, PA, who has been a friend for over eight years. Father John looks forward to humbly serving the Church as the Holy Spirit directs through Metropolitan Ephraim and Bishop Demetrius.

## Pastoral Visit to Seattle

Metropolitan Ephraim of Boston and Bishop Demetrius of Carlisle traveled to Seattle for the patronal feast of St. Nectarios American Orthodox Cathedral. While there, they spent time with the children and youth, who are the future of the Church.



*Metropolitan Ephraim and the children*



*Father James, Bishop Demetrius, Father Neketas and the youth*



## First Pilgrimage to Ukraine



*A group shot at Saint Clement's Monastery in the Crimea*

From October 10-21, Bishop Demetrius of Carlisle led a pilgrimage to Ukraine. With Kiev as our home base, we traveled to Rivne, Lutsk, Pochaev, and south to the Crimea. It was a good opportunity for the 34 pilgrims from North America to meet fellow Christians from our parish in Rivne. After a Hierarchical Divine Liturgy and trapeza there on the Feast of the Holy Protection (October 1/14), some members of our host parish accompanied us for the remainder of the pilgrimage. For many, it was a “once in a lifetime experience” to visit so many cathedrals and shrines, and venerate the relics of the Royal Martyrs, Saints Barbara, Vladimir, Theophil, Job of Pochaev, Clement of Rome, not to mention processing in single file with lit candles through the intricate tunnel structure of the Kiev Caves, which house the relics of more than 130 Saints. A few courageous souls even jumped into the Black Sea at the place where Saint Vladimir was baptized in 988.

Special thanks go to Matushka Tatiana Kukunov for booking hotels, scheduling flights and tours, and making all the other arrangements which made everything run so smoothly. With God's help, there will be another pilgrimage to Ukraine October 2-14, 2011. Space is limited, so if you are interested please call Matushka Tatiana (781) 320-0102, or email [tkukunova@aol.com](mailto:tkukunova@aol.com).



## Human Failings—Part 2

by Metropolitan Ephraim of Boston

*The account that follows, taken from the Life of Saint John the Almsgiver, is a continuation of the previous chapters of the Saint's biography. The text below was not included in the book, Three Byzantine Saints, because the editors felt it did not have any relevance to Saint John's Life. However, the editors were quite wrong. The story of Saint Vitalius has a great deal of relevance to Saint John's Life, and also many valuable lessons for us about judging others before "the time." The "time," of course, refers to the Last Judgment of God, Who alone is the righteous Judge and Knower of hearts.*

Now a certain great elder, who was about sixty years old, heard many things about Saint John and wished to test him to see if he was easily persuaded by words, quickly scandalized, and lightly condemned others. He dwelt in the monastery of Abba Seridus, but went to Alexandria and proceeded to take up a manner of life which easily scandalized men, yet was easily approved of by God, Who "granteth to each man according to his heart" (cf. Ps 19:4), as David says.

As soon as he entered the city, he recorded all the known prostitutes in a register and began to work, earning a carat (a small coin equalling 1/24 of a *nómisma*) each day. At sunset he ate one farthing's worth of lupin, and then took the rest of his wage and entered the dwelling of one of the harlots where he gave her the farthings and said, "Give me this night and do not commit fornication." And so he remained near her all that night, guarding her that she not fall into carnal sin. From the early morning, he took up his stand in a corner opposite the place where the woman was wont to sleep, and he chanted and prayed for her, making prostrations, even until daybreak. On leaving, he made her swear that she tell absolutely no one of his deeds. But one of the harlots revealed him, that is, his manner of life, saying, "He does not come to us so as to fornicate, but so as to save us," and the old man prayed, and she became possessed of a demon, so that the rest would fear and not reveal him during his life. So men said to the demonized woman, "See there, God has requited you because you lied. That miserable wretch goes to fornicate and for no other reason."

Thus the holy Vitalius, for that was his name, wished to flee the glory of men and to call forth souls from darkness, and he would say in the hearing of all when at work his turn came and he received his meager wage, "Let's go, master! Madam so and so awaits you!" As many would jeer and mock him, he replied, "So what? Do I not have

a body like everyone? Or is God wroth with monks only, that they should die of self-constraint? Surely they are men like everyone else." And some would reply to him, "Take for yourself one woman, Abba, change your garments and have children, lest God on your account be blasphemed and you bear the guilt of the souls who were scandalized by you." But he answered with oaths, feigning anger, "As the Lord lives, I shall not listen to you; depart from me! Now I have to do nothing else so that you will not be scandalized, save to take a wife, and so to worry over a household and live wretchedly? God forbid! He who wishes to be scandalized, let him be scandalized and break his head! What do you want with me? Has God made you judges of me? Away with you; mind your own souls! You need make no defence for me. One is the Judge and the holy day of judgment, even He Who then shall requite every man according to his works. If God did not wish it, I would not have come to Alexandria." These things he said making a great tumult and shouting, such that hereafter all tried to cover his mouth. And he also said, "Truly, if you do not give way, through me you will give way to your own harm."

When some of the church officers had often heard these things from him, they reported to the Pope [St. John] his affair. But God, Who knew that the righteous Vitalius did not desire to offend Him, hardened the heart of the Pope and he believed nothing he was told—for by the experience with the aforementioned eunuch [*Human Failings*, Issue 37] he was full of fear—but rather he cast out those who told him of Abba Vitalius, rebuking them severely with these words: "Cease slandering the monks. Do you not know that it is recorded in the writings about Saint Constantine the Emperor that certain men who did not fear God began after the completion of the holy Council [in Nicea] to make slanderous accusations to the blessed emperor about one another, some being bishops, some monks. But Constantine, that true saint of God, assembled both parties, I mean the accused and the accusers, and caused the accuser to repeat the transgression before the face of the accused, though it was adultery, though murder, or worse still, whatever it was. When he discovered that many of these slanders were actually true, he remembered him that said, 'Who is weak and I am not weak?' and again how the Lord did not condemn the woman who was apprehended at the very moment of adultery, and imitating this he brought forth a lighted candle before all, I mean the accusers and the accused, and burned all the reports which had been given to him. And he said, 'In very truth, if with my own eyes I saw a

priest of God or one robed in the angelic habit falling into sin, I would stretch out my royal garment and cover him so that no one should see him.' Indeed, you had the same opinion about the eunuch, that servant of God, and you swept me up in it and brought great condemnation upon my soul." Thus, greatly shaming them, he dismissed them.

But God's servant Vitalius ceased not from his work, and he also besought God—even as he assured certain after his death in a vision—that sin be not reckoned to those who were scandalized with him, because, he said, "That which I did could easily cause scandal, and if a man has said something, he shall not be judged on my account." Now his labor brought many of these women to compunction when they saw him stretching out his hands all the night and praying for each one of the harlots. Therefore some of them stopped fornicating, while others moreover married husbands and lived chastely, and still others quit the world entirely and took up the monastic life. But until his repose no one knew that it was because of his exhortations and prayers that these lewd women ceased from sin.

One night, whilst he was coming forth from the dwelling of one of the chief harlots about dawn, a certain dissolute man encountered him as he was going in to sin with her, and as soon as he saw him, I mean Kyr Vitalius, on his way out from the woman, that vile man gave him a blow, saying, "Miserable wretch, mocker of Christ, how long will you continue your ways?" But the saint replied, "Believe me, blighter, you shall receive such a blow that all Alexandria will gather at your cries." Not long after, the holy man Vitalius fell asleep in peace in his little cell, no one perceiving it. For he had a tiny cell at the Gate called that of the Sun, where also he often held divine services at the nearby church of the Holy Womb, and some of the harlots would gather there, saying, "Let's go, let's go; Abba Vitalius is having another service." When they would come, he would take great solicitude for them, both eating and playing with them. But this would often stir up certain men to a frenzy, who would say, "They all love him, that pseudo-abba, and go after him!" for they did not know his hidden labor. Indeed, they beheld how he would enter all their dwellings, but they did not understand that he gallantly and chastely ran thither for their salvation.

Now when he had fallen asleep, as was said, in his own cell, and no one knew it, straightway a demon in the appearance of a villainous blackamoor stood before the man who had given Abba Vitalius the blow and said to him, "Take the blow which Abba Vitalius has sent you!" and the man immediately fell down and began to foam at the mouth. And according to the prophecy of Abba Vitalius, nearly all Alexandria gathered because of the violence which he suffered from the demon, and especially because

the sound of the blow was heard at nearly the distance of a bow-shot. After a goodly time, the possessed man came to himself and tore the garments upon his chest, running straightway to the cell of the saint, crying and saying, "I have sinned, O servant of God Vitalius, forgive me!" All those who heard him ran together and, as soon as they reached the cell of the saint, the demon rose up again and tore him. When those who had followed the man entered the cell, they found the saint kneeling and praying to the Lord, having already given up his soul, and on the earthen floor they found the inscription: "Men of Alexandria, do not judge anything before the time when the Lord shall come." Then also the demon left that man and he confessed what he had done to the saint and what he had said to him.

All this was immediately reported to the Pope and he came quickly to the remains of the righteous Vitalius. And when he saw the inscription on the earth he said, "Verily, with God's help, the humble John has escaped this inscription, for I might have received that blow which the possessed man received." Thereupon all the harlots, and those of them who had abandoned the world, and those which had married husbands took up wax tapers and oil lamps and went before his body weeping and saying, "We have lost our salvation and our instruction." And they explained to all his manner of life and that "It was not for some shameful deed that he came to us; we never saw him lying on his side, or drinking wine, or sleeping two hours in the night, or taking any of us by the hand." When some found fault with them and said, "And why did you not tell all of this, but allowed the whole city to be scandalized?," they mentioned the affair of the demonized woman and said, "Fearing that this also should befall us, we kept silent."

After Saint Vitalius was buried with great honor, the man who was punished by him and healed, remained to celebrate his days of commemoration and thereafter became a monk in the monastery of Abba Seridus in Gaza, where he also received the cell of Abba Vitalius according to his faith and stayed there till his death.

But the most holy Patriarch offered great thanksgiving to God Who had not allowed him to sin against His servant Vitalius. And many men and women in Alexandria were greatly edified and henceforth gave shelter to monks and were strengthened not to condemn lightly any of them. The sacred sepulcher of Saint Vitalius wrought healings after his death, and by his prayers may the Lord grant us mercy and a good defence in that day when He shall make manifest the hidden things of men and lay bare the intentions of hearts.

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## New Addition at Holy Nativity Convent

by Mother Martha

In the fall of 2009, Holy Nativity Convent completed a new three story addition, providing much needed space for the various handicrafts that the sisters work on for the support of the convent. This construction was made possible by an inheritance that the abbess, Mother Seraphima, received from her reposed uncle, as well as generous gifts from two local benefactors, thus making it possible for the sisters to take out a much smaller mortgage.

The first floor, a semi-basement, consists of the shop that is predominantly used for the laser engraver. There is a woodshop where all the preparation and finishing of the various wooden icons and plaques that the sisters engrave takes place. Another room houses the laser engraver, as well as bookbinding equipment, hat making supplies, the icon button machine, and card making. The woodshop was formerly in a tiny metal shed outside and the other crafts in various spaces all over the house, so it is so much more efficient to have all this together now.

The second floor, which is actually ground level, is the library/study/synaxis room for the sisters. Before this, the library was in a cedar closet, which had long run out of space and was very difficult to access. This room also provides a private space for the sisters and space for various activities. It also has a fireplace in the event of power failures (the convent has electric heat).

It is a very cozy and warm room, perfect for reading and quiet meditation.

The top and third floor is the iconography studio. It consists of a drawing room and library, a varnish/gold leaf room, a room for gessoing and preparing the plaster and fresco, and the main painting room—a large room with many windows and a very high ceiling. The previous icon studio was a much smaller room with very low ceilings, which limited the size of the icons the nuns could work on. In order to do an icon over 7 feet tall, they would have to push it up on the ceiling and also lay on the floor to paint, never being able to see what the finished icon looked like. Now they can do multiple icons over 12 feet tall, using all the walls of the studio. In the past year, they have been working on large canvases for several different churches (St. Demetrios in California, St. Seraphim in Virginia, and St. Cosmas in Maryland), something that would have been impossible without the new construction. The room that was the iconography room is now used for various fiber arts—knitting, spinning, weaving, and processing wool.

Thus, the new addition has helped greatly in allowing the sisters to be able to produce the various crafts that contribute to the support of the convent, as well as being able to offer them to the Orthodox faithful to enhance their worship.



*The new addition is on the right side*



*The new library*



## In Memory of Father Michael and Presbyteria Helen

Father Michael Lightfoot, the founder and pastor of Holy Wisdom Orthodox Church in Catlett, Virginia, was born Roy Nimitz Lightfoot on February 10, 1927 in Pecos, Texas. Father Michael joined the U.S. Army in 1944 and served in World War II and the Korean War. He resigned his commission in 1952, attended Texas Tech University for one year, and then attended the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where he studied physics.

While he was studying at Texas Tech, Father Michael met his wife, the future Presbyteria Helen, when he was her tutor in trigonometry. They married on July 4, 1953, and were married for 57 years.

After his military service and education, Father Michael embarked on a career in computer science, and retired in 2002 as a software engineer. At the time he retired, he was the oldest Ph.D. student at George Mason University, where he was preparing his thesis on language acquisition.

But Father Michael's greatest joy and deepest devotion was to our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. His mother had been a pious Protestant, and in his youth he became a Roman Catholic and later an Anglican for a few years. His continuing search for the True Faith led him to the Orthodox Church, and in March of 1964 he and his family became Orthodox at St. George's Antiochian Orthodox Church in Houston, Texas. He was ordained priest in the Antiochian Church on April 11, 1965, but two years later, since he was dissatisfied with the modernistic and ecumenistic practices of the New Calendar jurisdictions, he was received into the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia. After the family moved to the East Coast in 1970, they came under the spiritual direction of Holy Transfiguration Monastery. In 1987, because of disturbing developments in ROCOR, he joined the True Orthodox Church of Greece under Archbishop Auxentius, under the then Auxiliary Bishop Ephraim of the Holy Orthodox Church in North America.

Over the years, he served parishes in California, Connecticut, New Jersey, Germany, Rhode Island, and Virginia, and lastly, he founded the Church of the Holy Wisdom in Catlett, Virginia in 1993. In 1999, he was elevated to the rank of Archpriest in the Holy Orthodox Church in North America. In 2006, a book of Father Michael's sermons, *Sermons for the Orthodox Liturgical Year*, was published by St.

Nectarios Press. He reposed in the Lord on Tuesday, August 18/31, 2010, when he was 83 years old.

Presbyteria Helen was born Joan Helene Golding on December 8, 1929, in Amarillo, Texas. She studied English and Journalism at Texas Tech University, where she met and married Father Michael; later, she studied Anthropology and Russian at San Diego State University. In addition to being a dedicated wife and mother, she was a member of the choir in seven churches over the years, helped Father Michael establish three Orthodox churches, and, in 1993, dedicated her entire inheritance to build Holy Wisdom Orthodox Church. She reposed in the Lord on October 24/November 6, 2010. She was 80 years old. Her daughter, Mother Eirene, and Presbyteria Nicolette Bockman cared for her with love and patience during her long final illness.

Father Michael and Presbyteria dedicated their lives to Christ, and because of their example, both of their daughters became monastics. Father Michael baptized countless Christians into the Orthodox Faith, including some who later became priests, deacons, and monastics.

Father Michael and Presbyteria Helen are survived by their daughters Myrophora, nun, of Holy Nativity Convent, Brookline, Massachusetts, and Eirene, nun, of St. Mary Magdalene Hermitage in Warrenton, Virginia, and Presbyteria's sister, Elizabeth, novice, of St. Mary Magdalene Hermitage. Father James Bockman succeeded Father Michael as priest of Holy Wisdom Parish.

Father Michael was buried at Holy Wisdom Orthodox Church in Catlett, Virginia, on Friday, August 21/September 3, 2010. Presbyteria Helen was laid to rest next to her lifelong companion and dear husband on Monday, October 26/November 8, 2010. Memorial contributions may be mailed to Holy Transfiguration Monastery, 278 Warren Street, Brookline, MA 02445, (617) 734-0608, or Holy Nativity Convent, 70 Codman Road, Brookline, MA 02445, (617) 566-0156.

*For though I should walk in the midst of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff, they have comforted me. And Thy mercy shall pursue me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord unto length of days. (Psalm 22:4, 7)*





About Our Logo  
A Divine Confirmation

*The cross on our masthead commemorates the miraculous appearance of the sign of the Cross near Athens on Sept. 14 (according to the traditional Orthodox calendar) in 1925. Anti-Orthodox and secularist forces in power in Greece, together with the Ecumenical Patriarchate, had forced the changing of the traditional church calendar in 1924 as a first step toward uniting with the heterodox churches of the West. Shining in the evening sky on the traditional feast day of the Exaltation of the Cross, this extraordinary appearance of the Cross is a divine confirmation of Holy Tradition in the Orthodox Church and of the calendar as one facet of Holy Tradition.*

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Holy Orthodox Metropolis of Boston  
1476 Centre St  
Roslindale, MA 02131-1417  
Tel: (617) 323-6379; Fax: (617) 323-3861  
Web site: [www.homb.org](http://www.homb.org)

## THE DIOCESE NEEDS SUPPORT

“Every good giving and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights” (James 1:17). The perfect gift is the one that only membership in the Church can give: the knowledge of true worship and the grace of the Holy Mysteries. But our era suffers from a famine of truth and the true worship of God. In our weak way, we try to feed those who hunger for God. Your prayers and your donations help the Church in this awe-inspiring ministry. Another way to help is to make a bequest to the Church in your will. Remember that God loves a cheerful giver. Also remember that *The Faithful Steward* is in need of your support.



# The Faithful Steward

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